

BIG AMY ON WEE KNIGHTS

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A Charade Word is a word that may be divided into two or more words: CHARADE = CHAR + ADE. As the game is ordinarily played, one should choose words having component parts that when said together sound more or less like the whole word; otherwise, one may run into difficulties: BEAU TIES sounds like BOW TIES rather than the desired BEAUTIES. For an article such as this, however, where sight is more important than sound, we are not so restricted.

The only definitive article on Charade Words in Word Ways was by R. Robinson Rowe in the November 1969 issue, under the title "Foster Compounds". These were defined as two-part Charade Words where neither part was etymologically related to the whole. The article contained about 100 examples from his collection of 460. The main thrust of the work was to present 45 alphabetized fragments for readers to splice together in pairs.

To revive interest in Charade Words, particularly of the foster compound variety, we present below several sets for readers to solve. Rather than give the fragments, we present definitions of the pieces and of the whole. For example, fire truck + metallic element = sourdough bread calls for PUMPERNICKEL.

To make it easy, the words are arranged by length. To make it difficult, the definitions are single words and hence often obscure and vague. None of the words used appears in the Rowe article, but all of the words are in the Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary. (A few fragment words are not in this reference, but are common enough to be so.)

Let's get started. Here are ten foster compounds of the 3-3 type; that is, two words each of three letters may be combined to form a six-letter word. Score yourself one point for each one solved.

because + gain = neglect
except + weight = knob
conflict + shelter = guardian
layer + flight = confusion
wrong + addition = trip
barrier + offspring = plum
entreat + single = depart
ocean + child = flavor

projection + age = recorder
 girl + mineral = abundant

You didn't do so well? Perhaps a peek at Answers and Solutions will get you more in tune. Anyway, since these were one-point combinations, you haven't lost too many points out of the perfect score of 100. Let's now tackle some 2-1/2 pointers. These are of the 3-4 type.

cleave + girl = sword
 foundation + wicked = harass
 trap + instrument = suitcases
 container + youth = store
 against + chamber = bowl-like
 she + sound = fish
 obstacle + fury = shelling
 stuff + attendant = rushing
 vehicle + absent = herb
 demon + noble = adorn

To show how generous we are, you may round your score up to the nearest whole number. You seem to be improving somewhat. Ready for more 2-1/2 pointers? These are the reverse of the previous set, for they are of the 4-3 type.

harbor + result = forecast
 deed + particle = clique
 flesh + possessive = platforms
 exploit + she = plume
 wave + expert = outside
 hook + wing = weight
 shoe + clan = gourd
 bedroom + insect = inactive
 teases + relative = leather
 man + fish = refined

So far you have had a crack at amassing 60 points. This last set is the make-or-break one. Each correct answer is worth 4 points. But since we give so much, you must work harder. The only help you get is that the complete words are either eight or nine letters long. No hints about the fragments!

ruined + fury = commission
 sleep + shower = curb
 haze + disease = suspect
 distort + track = fighter
 wagon + elevation = insert
 inlet + fashion = scope
 outdo + indebted = conferred
 edges + beat = cosmetic
 cloth + Formicidae = officer
 beyond + spoken = rural

Surprise bonus! If you didn't peek at Answers and Solutions you may double your score. If you did, you are reduced by three points for each example of cheating.

Can one devise a Charade Word for which all three definitions are identical? No problem at all: TAXI + CAB = TAXICAB. Two slightly rarer examples, both given in the May 1969 Word Ways, are AUTO + CAR = AUTOCAR, and MOTOR + CAR = MOTORCAR.

All the above examples of Charade Words, being also foster compounds, are two-part. Naturally, multi-part words exist; the best probably is IN-DISC-RIM-IN-A-TI-ON, Philip Cohen's Kickshaws contribution in the May 1971 issue. If one allows somewhat rarer words, even greater heights can be scaled; the January 1974 issue of the British magazine Games & Puzzles cites PAR-LI-AM-EN-TAR-I-AN, AN-TIP-REST-I-DIGIT-AT-I-ON, and AN-TIC-ONST-IT-UT-I-ON-A-LIST.

Some Charade Words are divisible into phrases, as the title of this article suggests. One may even form complete sentences. (However, to divide a word into the sentence from which it was derived is clearly trivial, and not considered further: e.g., WHAT-DO-YOU-CALL-THEM.) The following dialogue between an American soldier and a country girl will illustrate:

Soldier: I' M A G.I., 'N ABLE

(That's imaginable, isn't it?)

Girl: HE-MAN G.I., O END, O THE LI', O MA!

(in case you don't know the word, i-tis-am-align-ant-tumor.)